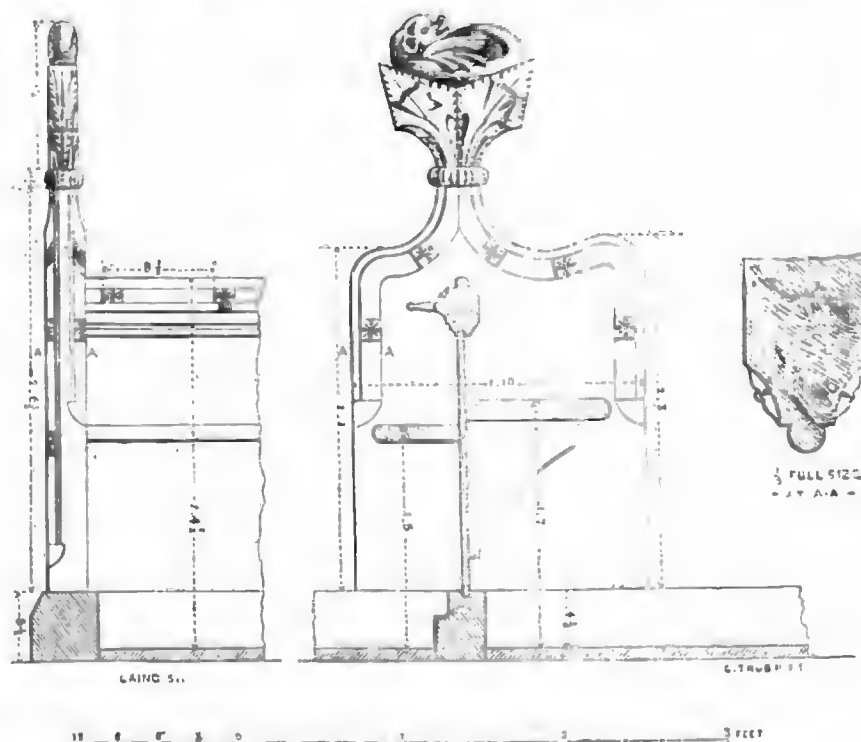


BENCH END, ICKLETON CHURCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.



enormous length of the columns represented in these beautiful memorials, we may recognise the germ of that desire for attenuated form which struggled even through the Norman era, but only boldly confessed itself under early English supremacy.

Fig. 5 is an engraving of a lectern and column, from a magnificent MS. of the Vulgate (Harl. 2803), executed in Germany during the twelfth century. The work is of enormous size and full of head letters, formed partly of figures and partly of Romanesque foliage, ingeniously arranged. The lectern is very remarkable in form, and seems, with other similar designs of excessive lightness, to go far in showing that, during the Norman times, this was a desideratum, and would have been adopted in architecture had it been thought consistent with strength and durability, and with the peculiar mode of construction, which was then in vogue.

It is in the MS. architecture of this period, that we principally find the shafts of columns ornamented with patterns sometimes drawn as if to represent sculpture, and at other times merely as chromatic decoration. The bases of columns also begin to assume greater importance, both in size and character of enrichments than at any previous or subsequent period.

Fig. 6 from a curious book (Reg. I. c. vii.) of nearly the same period, evinces the applicability of the remark to two columns, one of which has a base of most preponderating dimensions, enriched with foliage of easy and happy composition.

Our last engraving, a species of finial, of the beginning of the 13th century, belongs more properly to the article which will follow the present essay.

NEW WATER COLOUR SOCIETY.—On Wednesday evening this society lighted their gallery, and opened it to their patrons and many eminent persons. The various works, of which we have already spoken, were seen to good advantage.

CARVED BENCH ENDS.

We add to the examples of carved bench ends already given, a very nice specimen from Ickleton Church, Cambridgeshire. It is well adapted for modern use.

THE GAS MOVEMENT.

CURSORY COMMENTS.

IN our recent endeavour to prove to the satisfaction of the Gas Companies, and from the official records of their own experience as a class, that immense reductions in the price of gas to the public have heretofore yielded, and would yet yield, no less large and increasing harvests of profit to themselves, besides co-ordinate benefit to the public, and more especially to the humbler and more numerous order,—we adduced so many strikingly curious and convincing facts, out of a still more numerous host, in support of our position, that our limits compelled us to postpone, till now, the following more or less obvious comments on the argument and the evidence in its favour.

As for the general conclusion itself, so clearly arrived at and established, that the greater the price the smaller the dividend, and the smaller the price the greater the dividend,—that, in short, the sure way at least to double the dividend is to halve the price, and that, although the higher charge may barely pay, or fail at all to pay, the reduction of that very price will not only soon redeem the previous loss, but, like a small yet fruitful seed in a fertile soil, yield double, triple, yea, even occasionally tenfold increase,—that is a conclusion which curiously exposes the anomaly, the gross and strange absurdity, of the basis on which the whole scheme of the economics of gas in general, in the hands of its 'directors,' has hitherto stood and struggled into dire experience, in spite of the suicidal opposition of its 'friends.' And certainly such a conclusion ought forthwith to lead to serious deliberation, and a change of counsel, on the

part of those who have so uniformly and so stubbornly stood in the way of their own self-interests and the truest and highest interests of their constituents, the shareholders, till compelled by others to 'move on' towards that very goal, to attain to which alone with all possible haste they have themselves exclusively but blindly and erroneously aimed. If we have been fortunate enough to untie the bandage of blind fortune, by which their eyelids have plainly been hitherto bound, and to point them out the clear and open way to their own much longed-for destination, it will be gratifying to us, and well for all. But, lest some feasible stumbling-blocks even yet in the way may prove an obstruction, still, to so desirable a consummation—desirable to the public and to us, no less than to the more immediate profiteers, since the interests are mutual and identical—we shall now endeavour to obviate the most obvious of these, as far as our brief limits in the meantime will permit.

One very likely objection, then, to the propriety of even now turning over to that new leaf which lies in the reverse direction to the old, may be that now it is 'too late' to do so—that, even though unwillingly, the work is done—the race, the 'sack race,' with head and feet in the bread bag, is already run, the floundering o'er,—that prices once enormous are now not only moderate, but already at the minimum, and that they therefore cannot now be any further diminished consistently with even the sustenance of old profit, far less with an accumulation of new. But this is just the question still,—a begging of the question; and we not only do not admit the premises, but we appeal to the record of all we have written, in defence of our most earnest assurance that prices are at no such minimum—profits at no such maximum. We cannot at this moment recapitulate the extraordinary and anomalous facts to which we refer, but we have left the record itself in the hands of our readers and the public, and we refer the gas directors likewise, and their constituents, to its facts and inferences, for their serious consideration. Why, even a little further attention to the official record itself, already so fully